

Introduction

Seeds of Terror

In regions touched by conflict the world over, there are those who live in fear of the very ground they walk on. They must gather firewood, farm, play or simply visit neighbours knowing that their next step might be their last. These people endure one of the cruelest legacies of modern warfare: anti-personnel (AP) landmines.

AP mines are weapons placed in or on the ground, which wound or kill when activated by the pressure of a footstep. These hidden, indiscriminate weapons cannot tell the difference between the tread of a soldier or a child. They continue to kill and maim long after wars are over.

According to the International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL), more than 350 different kinds of anti-personnel mines have been produced by more than 50 countries. Used by military forces throughout the world, the low cost and easy deployment of landmines have made them a weapon of choice in the world's poorest countries. In countries such as Angola, Mozambique, Afghanistan, Cambodia and Bosnia, landmines are a terror ordinary people live with every day.

The widespread use of anti-personnel mines has created a humanitarian crisis of global proportions. While current assessments place the number of mines deployed throughout the world at somewhere between 60 and 70 million, this remains a rough estimate since few accurate records